

4.

I stood at the station because I didn't believe myself. I wondered what I wanted to know, what I wanted to do, who I wanted to have, and lied to myself for answer. I didn't want anything and therefore didn't know anything and so a life is a lie to itself. Tinny and weak, a tininess cried to me I didn't want to want to die, and yet the smoke and smell and noise of the train blocked off the cold air, whatever desolate wind sent a desolate, crumpled page scraping somewhere. The doors opened with many bangs and clangs, like traps in scaffolds, and I hung on as all that was busy and warm swarmed over me.

5.

Still life, still live, like an apple on a table, a bowl, a cloth, and everywhere out incredible life.

The Split

1.

Standing around the desk, looking at the record player playing Red Army songs, a friend, an aficionado, dropped in, stood around for a moment and grinned at the tenor's appassionato: "That's Jan?" he asked me, inclining his head in happiness. "Yah!" I answered. Just then Department Secretary came in with a message: the next poet I was bringing was scheduled to read in Hill Gymnasium. "What?" I asked her, visions of transparent blackboards, hoops, escalator benches, waxed hardwood floors adance in my head: choose your partner, do-si-do! "Whose," I wondered, "idea was that?" "In the first place, Mister So-and-so," (my name) "both auditoriums are scheduled or closed, and Sandy Callahan" (of Student Activities & Affairs) "suggested the gym might be a good place to hold your poets." She left and in front of my class I kicked over the wastepaper basket, threw my eraser and the chalk, and wiped the books off the table. After that I cussed out Sandy Callahan, glowered at them and said. "I don't give a shit. None of those fuckers got candles can stay lit in my spit."

2.

So it was good to get back to my room and find three ladies with black hair waiting there, happy to see me. I lay down on my bed, surrounded by my bookcases, my paintings, and them. Wherever home is, there's always maroon, dark woodwork, and they all had such pitch-black hair. I hardly know what passed for conversation. I imagine I grinned, rested my teeth on my lower lip, and one lady, murmuring "Alas!," slipped out the door and closed it, unplugging our impasse. Soon we three lay snake naked. I was peeking into somebody's wet ruby and wiry wreathed crevasse, red as beefsteak, thinking 'I could eat that with mustard and a bun,' thinking 'I wouldn't last in that for a minute,' so I sat on their chests and had them suck me, slipping myself from one set of teeth and lips to the next, thinking 'It'll be interesting to see if I can detect a difference,' and then I lost out in a face that neither art here nor memory there could make a person, dressed, and expelled myself into the street.

3.

People were sitting around liquor stores mixing their own drinks. Underneath the clocks on the downtown bank buildings, people stood in files while motorcars, at the change of light, cruised through open intersections. A couple of my friends wearing bearcat coats invited me to come with them, to poke my pout, my snout, into a little jar of gin. The juice was dusty and gray, like a juniper berry: it was gin, and into that heavy liquid troubles of person, place, and time passed like smoke off a doused fire, away, like someone abandoning a mirror, and yet this was it, the apocalypse, red and black, blood on the asphalt coming, clergymen and soldiers. This was it. The girls were gone. I was afraid I was too old to change, worth nothing to anyone. I'd been wrong. Now I'd be lost for good in the split.

4.

"For us today, decades after Krafft-Ebing and Freud, it is probably all too easy to invent psychosexual explanations of the long and continuous life of the strange legend Renaissance humanists called 'Caritas Romana.' The story of Roman Charity concerns a daughter whose father was imprisoned for a crime

and left to die of starvation, but whose uncommon courage and devotion inspired her to visit the prison and stealthily sustain her parent's life with milk from her own breast."

- Robert Rosenblum

5.

The moral of this long "poem" is that
one good turn deserves another. Tit for tat, etc.

-- Kenneth Rosen

Falmouth ME

LA MAUDITE RIVIERE ENRAGEE

as th red glo kunsumes
th hash in mi hart
i diskount th unresolv'd
hasls facing me
and plan to buy
a black cowboy hat

wearing it they wil say
yr not a cowboy
and i wil say
tru
i am a centaur
thiz is all u c of me

faraway on bits of paper
signals inviting me
to b in top form
emanate frum universities
bureaukrats and frends
a veritabl venus
flytrap for poets
lurks
in all th ways
i kan go
save one

la maudite riviere enragee
wd hav its migrant sail
on its thin skind soil
thru th cottonwoods and pine
wet lady of mi dreams
wher all th best in me
wil b or not to b